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come." This doctrine, it is said, necessarily implies that there are some sins that can be forgiven in the next world; and, consequently, there must be a middle place, called Purgatory. But what a slight and uncertain ground for such an inference! The more obvious meaning of this text would be, to any man of ordinary understanding, that the sin in question was so enormous, that it could not escape punishment either in this life or in the world to come.

Now, if the doctrine of the purification of souls was true, would the Apostles pass it over in silence? or would the early Church omit such salutary doctrine in her primitive teaching?

No argument can prove more effectually the great advantages which the Church of Rome derived from the doctrine of Purgatory than that all the ecclesiastical lands which Henry VIII. confiscated at the Reformation were formerly given by profligate and ferocious barons, and other eminent sinners, to the Church of Rome for the relief of their souls—"pro remedio animarum suarum." This historical fact is supported by Hume and Gibbon, and is too well established to be capable of contradiction.

The doctrine of purgation by fire is taken from the works of Virgil and Plato; "Month's Mind" and "Anniversaries" are taken from the heathen religion of ancient Greece, as may be seen by the "Travels of Anacharsis." Without this doctrine of purgation there would not be an adequate staple for the lucrative merchandise of Masses and Indulgences.

The next step I had to examine in the ecclesiastical ladder of the Church of Rome was Confession, and to see upon what foundation it was established. I found in the Maynooth Class Book, in the 21st canon of the Council of Lateran, under the Pontificate of Innocent III., in the year 1215—"Let every one, both man and woman, truly make confession of all their sins, at least once a year, to their own priest." The Council of Trent, in the 5th chapter of the 14th session, says, "that the universal Church has always understood that a confession of sins was ordained by Christ." The decrees of both these councils are founded upon that observation, which Christ addressed to St. Peter—"to thee I give the keys of the kingdom of heaven, whose sins you forgive they are forgiven, and whose sins you bind they are bound." In the old law the Jews could not be persuaded that their priests could forgive sin; nor did the priests themselves pretend to have such divine power. This is manifest, from what David says in the 32nd psalm—"Oh, I acknowledge my sins unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid;" and, again—"I said I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sins." Daniel says—"To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgiveness, though we have rebelled against him."—Daniel ix. 9. In this doctrine of the Old Scripture there is no mention of auricular confession or sacerdotal absolution. Let us now descend to the New Scripture, and inquire what authority can we find there for confession to a priest, or for the validity of his personal absolution. It will be said that when Christ gave the keys of the kingdom of heaven to Peter, and the power of forgiving sins, that confession to him and to his successors was necessarily implied. In ancient times, keys were the emblems of authority; and "the key of the house of David," says God, "will I lay upon his shoulders." Thus did God invest his son with the keys, which were emblematic of his authority. The house of David represents the Church of Christ; and when Christ says, "I am he who hath the key of David," he proclaims himself to be the sole spiritual ruler of his kingdom, to whom it was given by his Father. It is quite clear when Christ gave the keys to Peter, and to the other Apostles, that he gave them a commission to preach and teach the Gospel to all nations, and, in connection with it, the power of loosing and binding. All those who forsook heathenism and were baptized, had their sins forgiven them; but all those who disbelieved the Gospel truths, and adhered to the old leaven of Paganism, had their sins retained; and all this irrespective of auricular confession or priestly absolution.

SS. Peter, Paul, and John are good authorities on this subject. Peter told his countrymen, the Jews, that God raised up Christ to be a prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins. He says again to Simon Magus—"Repent and pray God, if, perhaps, the thought of thy heart be forgiven thee."—Acts viii. 22. Peter did not say, *come and confess your sins to me*, I AM THE VICAR OF CHRIST, to whom he gave the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and I WILL PARDON you. St. Paul says—"Through this man, Christ, is preached unto you the forgiveness of sin."—Acts xiii. 38. St. John says—"If we confess our sins, HE is faithful and just to forgive us our sins."—1 John i. 9. In all these passages it will be seen that forgiveness of sin is not connected with the ceremonial act or absolution of the priest, but depends exclusively upon the faith and repentance of the person. The Apostles heard no confessions, had no scruple-boxes, imposed no penances, but exhorted sinners to fly to God for forgiveness, which he was willing to afford "without money and without price." Beside these proofs, have we not Christ himself forgiving sin without confession, in the case of the man who was sick of the palsy. "Son, thy sins are forgiven thee."—Mark ii. 5.

If further proof is wanted to show that auricular confession is not warranted by Scripture, read the pathetic history of the weeping penitent of Bethany.

Moreover, Cardinal Cajetan, who was so famous in controversy at the time of the Reformation, said that auricular confession could not be proved directly, but only inferentially, or by way of implication from the Scripture.

Now, can that be properly said to be of divine institution, and necessary to salvation, which depends only on an inference, and is proved only by an *inuenio*? When our Lord issues his commands, they are ordinarily plain and express. "Go ye and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."—Matt. xxviii. 19. "Except a man be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."—John iii. 5. Would he not, also, have said somewhere—"Except a man confess his sins to the priest, he shall in nowise enter the kingdom of heaven," if he had intended to convey that as a divine command?

The early and greatest Fathers of the Church seem to have read Scripture, and never to have thought of the duty of confessing to a priest. St. AUGUSTINE says—"To what purpose do I confess my sins to men who cannot heal my wounds? To a set of men inquisitive in inquiring into the lives of others, but indolent in amending their own! And how shall they (who know nothing of my heart but by my own confession) know whether I say true or no? For no one knows what is in man but the spirit of man that is in him."\*

St. CHRYSOSTOM speaks lightly of confessions to men, and urges continual confession to God only. "It is not necessary," says he, "that thou shouldst confess in the presence of witnesses; let the inquiry of thy offences be made in thy thoughts; let God only see thee confessing."

I do not say to thee, bring thyself on the stage, nor accuse thyself to others; but I command thee to obey the prophet, saying, reveal thy ways unto the Lord, confess them before God, praying, if not with the tongue, at least with thy memory, and so hope to obtain mercy. Thou art ashamed to say that thou hast sinned—confess thy faults, then, daily in thy prayers. Nor do I say confess them to thy fellow-servant, who may reproach thee therewith—confess them to God who healeth them."†

Is it possible to read these passages, and believe that either St. Augustine, or St. Chrysostom, conceived that secret or auricular confession of every sin to a priest was an indispensable condition of salvation? An open declaration of sin, and further, atonement was, no doubt, urged and required when the crimes of notorious offenders had given open scandal. "Open confession is good for the soul," is an observation of daily familiarity all over Europe at the present day, and dates its origin from the infancy of Christianity. In the Eastern Churches an open acknowledgment of sin was made by the Catechumens after their conversion from Paganism, and before they were baptized; and when they were sufficiently instructed in the principles of their newly-adopted religion, a declaratory absolution was pronounced by the priest before they received the Lord's Supper—"May the Lord God forgive you your sins"—indicating thereby that God alone could forgive sins. It was in the same manner the Jews believed, when they accused Christ of blasphemy for having told the man sick of palsy, "thy sins are forgiven thee."

An officer, called the Public Penitentiary, for some time existed, at least in the Eastern Church, until it was abolished by Nectarius, Bishop of Constantinople, in the latter end of the fourth century, on the occasion of the confession of a noble matron, admitting her guilt with a deacon of the Church there, which, coming to the ears of the people, created such a popular commotion, on account of the dishonour and scandal that it reflected on the whole Church, that Bishop Nectarius, to extinguish the flame, and prevent like occasions in future, abolished the office of penitentiary altogether; "by which means," says the ecclesiastical historian, Sozomen, "every man is left to the conduct of his own conscience, and permitted to partake of the holy mystery at his own peril."

In the Western Church, it was that despotic tyrant, Innocent III., who trampled on the necks of kings, and absolved their subjects from allegiance—who subverted the natural law by the ultramontane doctrine of Transubstantiation—who introduced a pharisaical hypocrisy, in the southern states of Europe, by that infernal machine the Inquisition—it was he who enslaved the human mind by the introduction of auricular confession, with all its disgusting disclosures and loathsome revelations; and the same year, 1215, that beheld the human mind reduced to the most abject slavery, on the banks of the classic Tiber, by a tyrant Pope, witnessed, also, the freedom of every British subject, by the powerful influence of the Barons at Runnymede, on the banks of the Thames.

(To be continued.)

\* S. Augus. Confess., lib. x., c. 3., tom. i., p. 171. Paris, 1679.  
† Hom. de pœnit. et confess., tom. iii., p. 901.

#### TO CORRESPONDENTS.

We have again to apologize to several of our friends for postponing their valued communications. Letters from Mr. E. Power and Mr. Rourke are in type, and will be inserted in our next.

We beg to call the attention of our correspondents to the utility of adding their name and address to their communications.

To diminish the chance of disappointment, all letters should be forwarded to the office by the first day of the month.

All letters to be addressed to the Editor, 9, Upper Sackville-st. Contributors of £1 per annum will be furnished with six copies, any of which will be forwarded, as directed, to nominees of the subscriber. Any one receiving any number of the journal, which has not been paid for or ordered by himself, will not be charged for it, and may assume that it has been paid for by a subscriber.

## The Catholic Layman.

DUBLIN, JANUARY, 1855.

THE promulgation of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin is the great event of the 19th century. The joy which it appears to have inspired in that large class who are led more by their feelings than reasoning and evidence, and the consternation which it has created among those who, though sincerely attached to the Church of Rome, have loved it chiefly because they believed it to be an unchangeable Church, which never innovates or decides without reason, are equally remarkable and startling to those who look on as impartial spectators of a proclamation so novel in modern times.

It is not merely giving a new honour to the Virgin Mary, it is authoritatively announcing a new fact, and a fact too, which, if true, gives a new character and aspect to the Christian religion. It is, in truth, little less than the promulgation of a new religion—a religion of which the mortal being, thus raised above the pale of humanity, is to be the goddess. It is adding a cardinal fact to those which have been handed down to us as the truths of the Gospel history; and that not upon the authority of tradition—for the belief in it can, in no way, be traced to ancient times; not upon the authority of Scripture—for the New Testament is wholly silent as to any of the circumstances of the birth of the Mother of our Lord; but solely upon the authority of the Pope, and those bishops whom he assembled in the Vatican, in December, 1854, to join him in taking advantage of an apparent agreement among his adherents, to make himself remarkable by doing what none of his predecessors, for the last 700 years at least, has been able to accomplish.

What is the reason of this present agreement? Has any new light broken in—any new evidence—any new revelation burst upon the world? or is the only reason for the present agreement, that it has become more agreeable to the feelings of the worshippers of the Virgin to believe her free from the taint of original sin, and immaculate from the first moment of her conception in the womb of her mother?

We may, perhaps, assume, that neither Pope Pius, nor Archbishop Cullen, nor Cardinal Wiseman, pretend to any particular personal knowledge upon the subject upon which they undertake to pronounce. They are not, like the Apostles, witnesses of facts which they themselves have seen or known, or even which they have heard from credible witnesses. They declare upon the state of a matter which happened nearly nineteen hundred years ago—a matter for which no contemporary narrative vouches—nay, which plainly was not believed in at the time of the alleged occurrence. They can refer to no written testimony, either in the New Testament, or any other book. They cannot say that the story has been handed down, in the Church, from generation to generation. But what is done is this—a certain number of ecclesiastics, assembled at Rome, in the year 1854, without any evidence whatever—upon their own speculation, and nothing more—choose to affirm, that a particular miracle happened some years before the Christian era; and, having so affirmed

it—because they think if it did not take place it ought to have taken place—they demand that, upon pain of damnation, all Christian people shall believe that it actually did take place.

Now, is this anything more or less than the assumption of a power to manufacture the facts of Christianity? It is the only word by which we can express the process by which this new fact is concocted. We could perfectly understand the assertion that some new evidence had been discovered which established a fact hitherto unknown, even after the lapse of nineteen hundred years—nay, we could understand men to say that a more careful collection of existing evidences had led them to the belief in any particular state of things; but it is quite another thing to say that that which was not a fact yesterday is a fact to-day, because some bishops in Rome think that it ought to be so. The founder of the Mormonites was, at least, rational and consistent; his story was, that he found certain histories, long lost to mankind, and recorded certain facts hitherto unknown. If the Mormonite invented the facts, he thought it necessary, also, to manufacture the evidence. The conclave at Rome has a shorter and readier way—that of manufacturing the facts without any evidence at all.

Into the discussion of all the consequences that naturally follow from the belief in this new dogma, it is not our purpose now to enter. Those who accept it will hold a religion to which Christianity will scarcely be the most appropriate title. That religion will be much more the religion of Mary than the religion of Christ. If men really believe in this miraculous birth of the Virgin, she was, long before the angel visited her to announce the coming birth of the Saviour, a being above humanity. Had she never been the mother of the Saviour, she was divine; she was, in fact, the author of Christianity—the first divine being that was born in human nature.

The idolatry that must directly follow from such a belief is alarming indeed. We cannot think that intelligent Roman Catholics will be ready to revolutionize their faith at the bidding of the conclave assembled at Rome. There is, however, in the promulgation of this fiction, an humbling lesson to the arrogance which is wont to boast, that in keeping to the See of Rome as the centre of unity, they escaped, at least, all danger of the novelties by which Protestants are sometimes distracted. The faith of Roman Catholics, we are often triumphantly told, was rested on the unalterable foundation of ancient tradition. "Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus." This was the safe test of "Catholic" belief, according to the dreams of the Puseys, the Newman, and the Wilberforces. Behold the realization of your dream in the monstrous novelty of "the Immaculate Conception." Mokanna, raising his veil, did not more horrify and surprise his victim than this novelty must those who went to the Church of Rome to listen to the certain voice of *ancient* teaching, and found the conclave of modern bishops issuing forth the new doctrine of "the Immaculate Conception."

We cannot pause to point out how apt an illustration this supplies of the mode in which many other doctrines, equally novel, may have been thrust upon the Church. We know, beyond all question, that this very doctrine of the Immaculate Conception has not been, up to this time, generally received. Now, we presume, it is an indisputable article of faith. Why? not because it has been received by all Christians from ancient times; but because a conclave of bishops, selected by the Pope, have chosen to impose it upon the Church. Five centuries hence, if contemporary evidence should perish, who could tell the origin of the belief, then, no doubt, both ancient and universal. Just in the same way

were foisted upon Christianity all those peculiar tenets which distinguish Roman Catholics, to the receipt of which by their Church, Roman Catholics now point, as evidence that the belief in them is ancient and universal.

Unquestionably, it never again can be urged that the reception of a doctrine by the Roman Catholic Church is any evidence that it has come down from ancient times. We now know of a certainty that there is a mint at the Vatican where new coins of doctrine can be constantly struck off; and even if they affect the impress of antiquity upon the die, or the date of ancient times upon the legend, they no longer conceal the truth that the coins they issue may be of modern manufacture, as much as that of the medal of Australian gold, which has been struck in honour of the event—"Deiparæ Virgini sine labe conceptæ"—to commemorate the new fact which Pope Pius has added to the narrative of the New Testament.

It is with deep interest that we watch for indications of the feelings and opinions of Roman Catholics concerning this late decree of the Pope, establishing the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception as an article of the Roman faith.

Our readers are, perhaps, equally anxious to know what view is taken of it by those who profess to express the opinions of Roman Catholics, and how they get over the difficulties which, as we showed in our last number, do arise from that decree.

Our attention has been engaged by two leading articles in the *Tablet*, of December 23, which throw much light on this subject. Whether we consider the assertions, the confessions, or the contradictions contained in them, those two articles appear to us most instructive.

The previous number of the *Tablet* (Dec. 16), in its leading article, had said, in reference to this decree of the Pope—"The Immaculate Conception is now a solemn article of Catholic faith;" where the word "*now*" evidently admits that it had *not* been so the week before.

The first leading article of December 23, thus proceeds:—

"In all its circumstances, whether we look without the Church or within it, we should say that the time for giving the authoritative decision on this great question, has been most happily chosen. . . . Looking to the dogma in question, the circumstances of the time are not less happy."

And here are the facts which make the choice of the time so happy—

"For twelve centuries the fact of Mary's Immaculate Conception remained unquestioned."

St. Bernard, in his 174th epistle, explains how it happened not to be questioned; when writing to the Church of Lyons, on the feast of the Immaculate Conception, *then lately invented*, he says—"We can never enough wonder that some of you could have the boldness to introduce a feast which the Church has *not the least knowledge of*, which is neither supported by reason, *nor backed by any tradition*." Of course, men do *not* question that of which they have never heard.

The writer in the *Tablet* proceeds—

"Then a controversy arose; and the Church permitted controversy; for she is the mother and the nurse of rational intellectual freedom. . . . Ours was the *earnest controversy* of men deeply interested for the faith that establishes the transmission of original sin on the one side; and, on the other, for the honour and privileges of her who, in the minds of both parties, ranked as the most highly-gifted of God's creatures. And so the Church, seeing only a burning zeal for faith on all sides, *graciously stood by and listened*. Toward her faithful children, as long as charity presides over disputation, she has always put in practice this noble system of enlightened tolerance and fond forbearance."

The principle here laid down has our entire concurrence. We are delighted to have the testimony of the *Tablet*, that the Church encour-

rages controversy when carried on in an earnest and charitable manner. We trust that the readers of the CATHOLIC LAYMAN will approve of this as much as we do.

But we greatly doubt whether the controversy on the Immaculate Conception was really carried on in so charitable a spirit. And even if it were, we are puzzled to see how it could be the duty of an infallible judge to "stand by and listen," because those disputing were willing to be taught. The *Tablet* itself says, that it was an article of the Catholic faith that was in dispute. Some said that article was true; others confidently affirmed that it was false. St. Bernard, "the last of the Fathers," maintained that it "either honours sin, or authorizes a false holiness." Pope Sixtus IV., in his decree, dated 1483, says that—

"Some preachers of various orders, as we hear, in their sermons to the people, publicly, through various states and countries, have not blushed hitherto to affirm, and do not cease daily to preach, that all those who hold or maintain that the glorious and immaculate Mother of God was conceived without stain of original sin, do sin mortally, or are heretics. That those who celebrate the office of her Immaculate Conception, or who listen to the sermons of those who affirm that she was conceived without stain of this kind, do sin grievously. From which preaching, heavy scandals have arisen in the minds of the faithful, and greater scandals are, with reason, feared to arise from day to day."

This is the testimony of a Pope, in a solemn decree. We ask our readers seriously to consider, *was* this a case in which a divinely-appointed and infallible judge of faith, should "graciously stand by and listen!" What! one party in the Catholic Church contends for "a solemn article of the Catholic faith," and another party in that same Church denies that article, and cries out that those who hold it are heretics, and that it is a mortal sin to listen to them! Truly, the controversy appears to us more earnest than charitable. Yet this was the case in which that so-called infallible judge of controversies, himself bitterly lamenting these "heavy scandals," and fearing still greater, "graciously stood by and listened" for SEVEN HUNDRED YEARS!

Who is not ready to exclaim, "away with such an infallible judge. Let him do his business if he can. If he cannot, let him cease to mock the world by telling them that he has power and authority from God to settle all controversies of faith as they arise."

But let us return to the article in the *Tablet*—

"But, unlike what happens among heretics, whose gloomy destiny it is to be always seeking, and never finding, the *friendly* controversy between domestics of the Catholic household are sure to come ONE DAY to the desired end."

Well, SEVEN HUNDRED YEARS is a long day to wait! In that time TWENTY GENERATIONS of men lived and died! Was not their destiny as gloomy as the heretics? and more bitter, too—mocked as they were by the pretensions of an infallible judge of controversy, who, "when debates arise among Catholics concerning points of faith, . . . *fails not* to examine them by the received rule of faith, and to pronounce an authoritative sentence upon them. The dispute is thus quashed, and peace is restored."—Milner's End of Controversy, Letter xi.

But let us hear the circumstances under which the controversy was decided—

"It was, therefore, at a moment of complete internal freedom and repose, when dispute was long dead, and disputation silent. . . . when already the myriad children of Christ were clinging, and had long been clinging, with fond embrace, to the sweet and beautiful doctrine of Mary's sinlessness, it was at such a moment . . . that a Pope, the last and best of a long galaxy of Pontiffs, who, from the time of Sixtus IV., had been shedding down their lights on the path of this sacred tenet, chose to gratify the long-cherished wishes of the children of the Church, by the issue of a solemn, judicial, and definitive sentence, proclaiming that Mary had never contracted the stain of original sin—that this truth has been revealed by God to man, and is, therefore, from henceforth and for ever, an article of Catholic belief, which no one can *HEREAFTER* deny

impugn, or doubt, without losing his faith and becoming a heretic."

Mark that word, "hereafter." They might have denied it before, as St. Bernard did, *without* being heretics. And why, if it was indeed "revealed by God to man?" Mark that, Roman Catholics! It is no heresy to deny what God has revealed to man; but to deny what the Pope says, that is rank heresy!

But see how happily the time was chosen! "When dissent was long dead, and disputation silent!"

Do our readers remember a story in the first page of our number for October? "The wise old man;" who told the secret of his success in settling disputes—"never to interfere till the battle was over." We took that story from the *Tablet*. We said that the Pope must be the old man intended; and, lo! the *Tablet* now declares that the wisdom of the Pope consists in choosing his time thus happily, when "dissent was dead, and disputation silent!"

Roman Catholics are fond of proving the necessity of the Pope's judicial powers, by the necessity of judges in courts of law. But if such a judge should say to all parties who brought a case into court, "go and settle it among yourselves; when you have no longer any dispute between you, that will be the time to come to me, and I will then settle it in a trice;" would not all men cry out that such a judge was the greatest humbug the world had ever seen?

But hear now the conclusion which the writer in the *Tablet* draws from all this—

"Whenever necessity arises for a downright unmistakable pronouncement, be sure the Church—the living, speaking, acting, judging authority of the Church—will make itself heard."

Our readers are plain men, and have plain common sense. We ask them, *when* does the necessity arise for a "downright unmistakable pronouncement?" Is it *necessary* when parties are disputing, or when they have ceased to dispute?

But we come now to the second article in the *Tablet*, of December 23, which immediately follows the one we have been considering; and we confess it does surprise us, as, perhaps, it will our readers too.

Observe, that "dissent is long dead, and disputation silent."

What is the subject of the article which follows?

Why, simply, this fact, that it is at this moment under discussion by the government in France, whether the Pope's decree in favour of the Immaculate Conception will be allowed to be published at all in France!

Now, the greatest canonists are agreed, that no one is bound by the Pope's Bull or decree until it has been published in his own country. And it has been sworn before committees of parliament, by the most eminent of the Irish Roman Catholic bishops, that no decree of the Pope is of any force in any country, until it has been published in that country. So this dispute about publishing the Pope's Bull in France involves the question whether the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception is to be a binding article of faith in France or not—whether the Roman Catholic faith is to be the same in France as in other countries! But let this article in the *Tablet* tell its own story—

"Now, while all Christians throughout the world are exulting with joy at this great event, long desired, which has taken place in Rome, *there are men in Paris, the natural and ancient enemy of the eternal city (Rome), who throw themselves into a fever of rage, and, under pretence of guarding their liberties and defending their rights, are prepared to renew the ancient contentions of the university and parliament of Paris, to stir up the embers of an extinct sedition, and to scandalize the faithful throughout the world.*"

This does seem rather strange if "dissent be

dead, and disputation silent." But let us hear further—

"A Papal Bull is by this time in France, in the hands of the Apostolic Nuncio, but the publication of which, we are told, cannot be made before it is discussed in the council of state. Certain Gallican lawyers are still to be consulted, it seems, before the French nation may safely believe, with divine faith, that our Blessed Lady was conceived without sin. The general belief of the faithful, the concurrence of bishops and priests, and the infallible decree of the Sovereign Pontiff are, as yet, all worthless, until these wise men shall have given the final stamp of their approbation. . . . One of these dishonest additions to the concordat, requires all decrees and letters emanating from the Holy See, to be submitted to the council of state for examination, and, we suppose, approval, before they can bind the consciences of Frenchmen. This is the state doctrine. . . . The Gallican spirit is essentially seditious."

Let our readers mark that this is the law of the greatest Roman Catholic country in Europe about the decrees and Bulls of the Pope, by which he undertakes to make new articles of faith. Those Bulls cannot even be published in France until the council of state has examined and sanctioned them. And this law is now put in force about the Pope's infallible decree on the Immaculate Conception, by a Roman Catholic government founded on universal suffrage! No wonder that the *Tablet* should be very angry at seeing an infallible decree so dealt with.

We shall have more to say, as this question proceeds, about this "Gallican spirit," which the *Tablet* considers so seditious. It is, in fact, a very ancient denial, by the French Church, of the infallibility and almost the supremacy of the Pope. It was thought that this had died out in France; yet we see that now, when it was thought that "dissent was dead," and that all was safe for infallibility to show itself, this great attempt of the Pope has brought the old Gallican spirit to life again.

And we must say, that the Pope's attempt was well calculated to produce such an effect; for it is the first instance, in the history of the Church of Rome itself, in which the Pope has ever attempted to settle articles of faith, without the concurrence and consent of the princes of Christendom. The ancient general councils were called by the Roman emperors. The emperors presided and spoke in them. The great officers of state, and the Roman senate, were present, and took part in them, and directed the proceedings.

In the ninth century, no less a Pope than Nicholas I. himself, wrote thus to the Emperor Michael—"Where have you read that the emperors, your predecessors, were present in councils, *except it were in those in which the faith was treated of, which is an universal and common concern of all, pertaining, not only to the clergy, but to the laity, and to all Christians.*"\*

The learned work of Cardinal Jacobatus, "De Concilio," written not very long before the Council of Trent, speaking of the presence of emperors and kings in a general council, says—"But they need not of necessity be present, *except when the faith is treated of.*"†

At the Council of Trent itself, the emperor sent his ambassadors, with a commission to act in his name, and to vote in all the deliberations of the council; and it appears, by the published lists of those who were present at the Council of Trent, that the princes of Europe were represented in that council by sixteen ambassadors, ten of whom were laymen.

And now, for the first time in the history of the Church of Rome itself, the Pope has at-

tempted to establish an article of faith, in an assembly of bishops only, excluding the princes of Europe. To this novel attempt at excluding the laity altogether from what even Pope Nicholas I. admitted to concern them as much as priests, the Emperor of the French has most appropriately replied, by appealing to the old Gallican spirit of "sedition," as the *Tablet* calls it, and requiring that the Bull shall be submitted to the council of state; a measure which, as CATHOLIC LAYMEN, we heartily approve.

There are already other indications of open resistance to the Pope's decree. A leading newspaper, published in Rome, reports that the heads of the Franciscan order publicly returned thanks to the Pope for establishing the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, which their order always supported. We were anxious to see if the Dominican monks, who always denied that doctrine, had done the same; but we found no mention of them. We have since heard, that the Dominican monks at Florence, in Italy, have spoken openly against the Pope's late decree, and refuse to submit to it. It would be strange, indeed, if the Dominican monks, one of the most famous orders in the Church of Rome, should now acknowledge that their order have always been supporting heresy, and denying an article of the Catholic faith. Yet they must now acknowledge this, or reject the Pope's decree. We shall wait to see further what the monks of St. Dominic will do.

In the meantime, enough has been confessed by the *Tablet* to show that the question cannot yet be considered at an end. There is still time to speak. Let our readers remember what the *Tablet* says in the article first quoted. "The Church permitted controversy; for she is the mother of rational, intellectual freedom." Only let "charity preside over disputation," and even yet the Church of Rome may "graciously stand by and listen."

#### RECENT CONTROVERSY AT BOULOGNE.

(Continued from vol. iii., page 151.)

Do not shrink from the simple issue to which the matter is now brought. I am proposing to try your claim by the test your Church has supplied. She has based the validity of all her peculiar doctrines upon a statement which cannot be proved for any one of them—upon the assertion, that her doctrines, as now held, have been the doctrines of the primitive Church. This is a simple matter of fact, to be determined by an appeal to history.

Here your difficulties thicken and overwhelm you. How is it, if the unanimous consent of the Fathers be the notorious fact you have asserted it to be—but which you have asserted, not because your Church proves it to be a fact, but because such assertion was the only expedient left her—that none of your writers can produce the only legitimate establishment of its truth? Why can you not at once come forward with that proof, which is just what your case requires, and which must silence us, so far as history goes? You allege that your infallibility was ever believed. You base it on certain passages of the Bible. Now, the Fathers wrote—many of them—especially on those passages. Let us select your leading one—"Thou art Peter," &c. Bring forward extracts from their writings to show that they did interpret those words as conveying infallibility and jurisdiction over the whole Church to Peter and the Roman Pontiffs. Show that they expressly said this. How is it your writers never do this? Your whole case rests on their ability to do so; yet, instead of it, passages are produced which speak of the grandeur of the See of Rome—which speak of a certain primacy allowed (the reason being in some cases specifically given, it is because of the political greatness of the city of Rome) to the Roman Pontiff; of the need of maintaining union with the Church of Rome, (Who would have denied it of her more than of the Eastern Church, as long as they continued pure Churches?) But you never produce a single honest extract, plainly stating that these writers held your modern doctrines, or derived them from the passages of Scripture which you now adduce in support of them.

Here, again, you are involved in a difficulty, from which there is no escape for you. When you are challenged, and put to the proof of your peculiar doctrines from antiquity, what is it you do? You give us certain passages which assuredly do not assert your doctrines—which do not even seem to contain them. Now, you cannot say these doctrines are not specifically enunciated, because they were not denied. For if you say this, you destroy your alleged proof from antiquity. And, in the

\* Ubi nam legis Imperatores antecessores vestros in synodalibus, conventibus interfuisse? Nisi forsitan in quibus de fide tractatum est, quæ universalis est, quæ omnium communis est, quæ non solum ad clericos, verum etiam ad laicos, et ad omnes omnino pertinet Christianos.—Ep. viii., Labbe & Coss., vol. viii., 310.

† Imo non debent de necessitate interesse; nisi quando tractatur de fide—De Concilio. Liber i., De personis secularibus.

‡ Locum et vires nostras in omnibus sessionibus, consultationibus, deliberationibus, tractationibus et actibus obtinere et gerere, consilium suffragium, eorum, et decretum nomine nostro dare. . . . Labbe & Coss., vol. xiv., 1135. Paris, 1671.